

REMARKS

Claims 1 through 16 are now presented for examination. Claims 1 through 11 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter. Claims 12 through 16 have been added to assure Applicants of the full measure of protection to which they deem themselves entitled. Claim 12 is the only independent claim.

The drawings have been objected to under 37 C.F.R. § 1.83(a) in that they fail to show the limitation of having the second developer carrying member abut to the image bearing member earlier than the first developer carrying member and to show the first embodiment where the second regulating member 56 is said to abut to the photosensitive drum first. In the corrected drawing sheet enclosed herein, Fig. 2 has been changed to show more clearly the separation between the regulating member 55 and the photosensitive drum as well as the path of the second regulating member 56 being closer to the photosensitive drum than the path of the first regulating member 55. The specification has been amended in the paragraph beginning at line 19 of page 7 to disclose the paths of the regulating members 55 and 56 as path S and path T as shown in the corrected drawing sheet.

Canceled Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,258,819 (Kimura, et al.). Cancelled Claims 1 through 6, 8 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,160,969 (Mizuma, et al.) in view of Japanese Patent Document No. 11-2961 (Kashiwabara, et al.). With regard to new Claims 12 through 16, these rejections are respectfully traversed.

New independent Claim 12 is directed to image forming apparatus in which plural developing devices develop an electrostatic image formed on an image bearing member. A rotary member holds the plural developing devices to selectively move any developing device to a developing position. The rotary member starts deceleration of the rotational speed of the rotary member before the selected developing device arrives at the developing position. Each of the plural developing devices has a first developer carrying member and a second developer carrying

member to develop the electrostatic image with developers carried by the first and second developer carrying members, respectively. The second developer carrying member is disposed upstream of the first developer carrying member in a rotating direction of the rotary member. A first abutting member is provided on the first developer carrying member to abut against the image bearing member to ensure the distance between the first developer carrying member and the image bearing member. A second abutting member is provided on the second developer carrying member to abut against the image bearing member to ensure the distance between the second developer carrying member and the image bearing member. During movement of the selected developing device to the developing position in association with rotation of the rotary member, the second abutting member is brought into contact with the image bearing member. Thereafter, the first abutting member is brought into contact with the image bearing member.

In Applicants' view, Kimura et al. discloses an image forming apparatus having an image carrier for electrostatically forming a latent image thereon, a revolver type developing device located in close proximity to the image carrier and a plurality of developing units each containing a powdery developer of particular color arranged around a rotary shaft. The developing device is rotated to selectively locate one of the developing units at a developing position where the developing unit faces the image carrier for developing the latent image. A guide member is mounted on a body of the apparatus and formed with an engaging portion for guiding the developing device toward and away from the image carrier in engagement with the rotary shaft. A movable member holds the developing device in such a manner as to allow it to be mounted and dismounted in the up-and-down direction and to cause the device to move along the guide member.

According to the invention of Claim 12, first and second abutting members provided on first and second developer carrying members of a selected developing device on a rotary member, respectively, abut against an image bearing member in a decelerating state of the rotary member before the selected developing device arrives at a developing position with the second

abutting device disposed upstream in a rotating direction being brought into contact with the image bearing member and then the first abutting member being brought into contact with the image bearing member. Advantageously, the shock caused by abutting the rotating developing device having two developer carrying members against an image bearing member in the developing position is effectively reduced and the developing device can abut against the image bearing member in a position closer to the developing position than when the downstream first abutting member is first abutted.

Kimura et al. may disclose a rotary member 5 carrying plural developing devices that is pivotally movable with respect to an image bearing member 4. In Kimura et al., a guide member guides a developing device toward and away from an image carrier in engagement with a rotary shaft and a movable member holds the developing device to allow the developing device to be mounted and dismounted in an up-and-down direction and to cause the device to move along the guide member. There is, however, no teaching or suggestion in Kimura et al. of the features of Claim 12 of a rotary member starts a deceleration of a rotational speed of said rotary member before a selected developing device arrives at said developing position, of a first developer carrying member and a second developer carrying member for developing the electrostatic image with developers carried by said first and second developer carrying members, respectively, of the second developer carrying member being disposed upstream of the first developer carrying member in the rotating direction of said rotary member, and that during a movement of the selected developing device to the developing position in association with a rotation of said rotary member, the second abutting member is brought into contact with said image bearing member and thereafter the first abutting member is brought into contact with said image bearing member. Accordingly, it is believed that new Claim 12 is completely distinguished from Kimura et al. and is allowable thereover.

In Applicants' opinion, Mizuma et al. discloses an image forming apparatus that has plural developing containers for developing an electrostatic latent image of a latent image carrier

by toners having colors different from each other except for black. A black developing container for color stores black toner for color and operates when the developed image on the latent image carrier every color is overlapped and transferred onto a transfer material to provide a color image. A black developing container for a monochromatic image stores black toner for a monochromatic image and operates when the monochromatic image is obtained. A device arranges the respective developing containers such that the developing containers are opposite to the latent image carrier.

Kashiwabara et al., in Applicants' view, discloses an electrostatic latent image developing device in which a developing gap is adjusted to maintain a positional relation between a sleeve member and a bristle cutting means by disposing the bristle cutting means opposite the peripheral surface of the sleeve member of the developer applying means supported so as not to move in a developing housing. The image developing device has first and second developer application means that are pivotally movable on a holding member.

Mizuma et al. discloses a rotary member 137 that carries plural developing devices. As recognized by the Examiner, Mizuma et al. does not teach a holding member pivotally holding first and second developer carrying members. Kashiwabara et al. only discloses a single stationary developing device 10 with a developer carrying member 40 fixed on the developing device and a developer carrying member 30 that is movable toward an image bearing member 2. Neither Mizuma et al. nor Kashiwabara et al. teaches or suggests the features of Claim 12 of a rotary member that starts a deceleration of a rotational speed of said rotary member before a selected developing device arrives at said developing position, of a second developer carrying member disposed upstream of a first developer carrying member in the rotating direction of said rotary member and that, during a movement of the selected developing device to the developing position in association with a rotation of said rotary member, the second abutting member is brought into contact with said image bearing member and thereafter the first abutting member is brought into contact with said image bearing member. It is therefore not seen that the addition of

Kashiwabara et al.'s a fixed developer carrying member and a movable developer carrying member to Mizuma et al.'s rotary member carrying plural developing devices could possibly suggest the features of Claim 12 including the second abutting member being brought into contact with said image bearing member and thereafter the first abutting member being brought into contact with said image bearing member during a movement of the selected developing device to the developing position in association with a rotation of said rotary member. It is therefore believed that new Claim 12 is completely distinguished from any combination of Mizuma et al. and Kashiwabara et al. and is allowable.

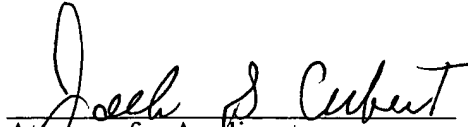
A review of the other art of record has failed to reveal anything which, in Applicants' opinion, would remedy the deficiencies of the art discussed above, as references against the independent claims herein. Those claims are therefore believed patentable over the art of record.

The other claims in this application are each dependent from one or another of the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request favorable consideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

Applicants' attorney, William M. Wannisky, may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our New York office at the address given below.

Respectfully submitted,


Attorney for Applicants
Jack S. Cubert
Registration No. 24,245

FITZPATRICK, CELLA, HARPER & SCINTO
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, New York 10112-3801
Facsimile: (212) 218-2200

JSC/cmg

DC_MAIN 190483v1